

**Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
November 13, 2014**

**Commission Members Present:**

Louis Romero	PFFALA (called in, but left about 30 minutes into the meeting)
Charlie Metcalf	LFSA (called in)
Chad Major	PFFALA
James Wood	LFCA
Michael Donahue	Senior Director, FETI
Butch Browning	State Fire Marshal
Donald Milligan	LSFA

**In Attendance:**

Loree Ramezan	FETI
Christine Melancon	FETI
Kathe Jones	FETI
Wayne Cruse	FETI
Eddie Tessmer	FETI
Eddie Pyle	FETI
C. Keith Bennett	FETI
Robert Hale	FETI
Steve Gervais	FETI
Dave Casey	FETI

Mr. Chad Major announced he would be serving as ad-hoc chairman for the meeting. The meeting was called to order with the pledge of allegiance and a prayer.

Since the chairman was unable to attend, no chairman's report was given at the meeting.

The first order of business was to appoint a new chairman and vice chairman for the commission. Mr. Major asked the commission if they had any nominations for chairman. Donald Milligan nominated Mr. Major. Mr. Major asked three times if there were any other nominations. No responses were heard; therefore Mr. Major closed the nominations and announced he was elected chairman by acclamation.

Mr. Major asked if there were any nominations for vice chairman. James Wood nominated Donald Milligan. Mr. Major asked three times if there were any other nominations. No responses were heard; therefore Donald Milligan was appointed vice chairman by acclamation.

**Director's Report**

Mr. Dave Casey gave the Director's Report.

Mr. Casey stated that in the past FETI had not done well with the weekend fire school attendance, so they tried a new platform at Pine Country a couple months back and it was pretty well attended for the first time being up there. FETI has copied that agenda and will be repeating it this Saturday and all of the

classes filled. FETI looked at the schedule and was able to rearrange it and get 2 additional instructors so they could fit more people, and then closed registration again at 115 people.

This is pretty much the same format FETI would like to use at the regional schools. FETI will just have to work with other training centers and farms that have some of the facilities. Mr. Casey stated that there was a great deal of interest and FETI had to turn away an awful lot of people because they just could not accommodate any more people. They will be in the big classroom.

Mr. Casey gave an example of one of the classes he will be teaching, Modern Fire Behavior and Flashover, has up to 70 people in it, and it could just get too big to do a lot of practical and it has a lot of practical. There is a lot of interest and a lot of positive comments going into it, so hopefully FETI will have lots of good things to talk about at the next meeting.

FETI got the purchase order issued the day before yesterday [November 11, 2014] for the maze and survivor trailers. The vendor here in town got it. They are building the triple-tier trailer. They are putting in the flooring. FETI will be doing the interior partitions because they actually will change, so they will go out for about a year and then FETI will rearrange the interior, so it does not get stale for everybody. Every time you see it should be a different layout or configuration. FETI should have them in by March. FETI's end of it will take a little bit of time to get done, but they have it pretty much all laid out.

A question was asked about whether or not these items were purchased on a grant. Mr. Casey said it was not. It was purchased with the one account; stat dedicated. These are replacements for the existing two that had just worn out.

The specifications for the B mobile prop, which is on a federal AFG grant, are out to bid right now. The specifications for the A have been done for a while, but FETI did not want to have them both out for bid through purchasing at the same time because they are similar and could be easily confused. Mr. Casey said that purchasing would get the materials that day, November 13, 2014, but it would probably take a week or two before it would go out [for bid]. In both cases they have at least five vendors that are interested and all five are capable of doing them. There are different sets [of vendors] for the two of them.

FETI has some loose equipment that they will be purchasing locally to go with the props: two more thermal imagers, lights, and generators for when they are setup out there in the field.

Mr. Casey moved on to the women's dorm. FETI has been working with campus on this and there are all sorts of code issues with campus safety, fire code, etc. FETI has found two vendors that will make a modular that can be brought in very reasonably. It is a small dorm. It is not a permanent building in that it is not a concrete block or a brick-type building. It is a modular building. FETI is hopeful that after Friday the campus folks will get that on the road. FETI had hoped to have it in by January and that is certainly not going to happen, but at the time of the meeting, Mr. Casey did not believe they had any women enrolled in the January class. Mr. Casey asked if there were any questions about the dorm, and no responses were heard.

Mr. Casey continued on to the next update, the funding for the multi-story. The request for the \$250,000 from the bond commission was declined. It did not meet their priority list and they were out of money. Mr. Casey has not spoken to Representative St. Germain, but they have called or emailed her. The funding also did not come out of her transportation funding which was another \$250,000, so at the

moment the project is dead in the water. FETI wants to talk to the different associations for support to try to get some additional funding, but it will have to wait until next session.

Mr. Casey then added that the day before the commission meeting he and Kathe Jones had a long conference call with the AFG brass. It is very clear that they will not fund a brick and mortar project. They will also not fund a permanent prop, only a mobile prop like the ones FETI just bought. However, they did say that they would entertain discussion on an engineered system type, like the shipping container type, or a purpose-built type modular structure. AFG will entertain a discussion on that. FETI will be working with the Oregon state training director and intends to approach AFG and see what they will do. By far, what looks to be the cleanest is to build a separate building that FETI would use as a secondary prop, kind of like the way FETI uses the single-story now, except this would be a burn capable building. They would then leave the multi-story as is, but still search for funding legislatively to repair it.

To replace that building it would be about \$12 million. Putting it in a shipping container version that, of course does not have the height or the size, would let FETI keep going with the class A fires for their classes. It appears FETI could apply for AFG funding for that and get a modest prop that would be much better than what they have at the moment. It would be a couple of containers, with one, or maybe two, burn rooms. It would last a number of years. It is certainly not going to be a thirty year fix, like the permanent building repairs that have been suggested, but FETI could get several years out of it, especially if they are careful and use a replaceable-lined burn box for the burn rooms. The rest of it will last easily ten years. FETI would use it as a different prop than the multi-story. Obviously, they would not do a high-rise drill in a two story prop.

The AFG grant opportunity opened a week ago and it closes in 3 weeks, which is before the next commission meeting, so in light of the very short window, Mr. Casey asked for some representation to meet with FETI next week and go over some different ideas and give them some input on which way to go with it. They have a couple of different routes they could take. They could get a permanent prop or another mobile prop that marries up to a permanent prop. AFG is going to require that whatever they do here has its own burn cells and things like that, which they could do. FETI could buy a modest one from a manufacturer, which is what AFG requires, and then they can add space with local. They could add additional boxes that are not burn boxes, but are just search areas, floor space, and things to move around in. FETI can do that pretty reasonably with an AFG grant. They can also look at getting an additional mobile prop for next year. That is what FETI wanted to meet with everyone on. Mr. Casey indicated that they had a good idea of where they wanted to go until the conference call yesterday afternoon, when AFG changed the rules, but he thinks AFG has changed them for the good.

Mr. Casey was asked how many students use that main burn building. He responded that they have 3 rookie schools per year, which would be about 100 students per year, plus the fire departments in the area that use it, which he thought might have been more than the rookie school. With the impending changes with PIAL, Mr. Casey expects the usage will go up quite a bit. The new PIAL looks like if a department has a written agreement with FETI and they meet the annual hours, the PIAL is looking at quite a bit of distance that they will accept and give the full training center credit. Mr. Casey indicated that Mr. Chad Major was involved with the new PIAL and asked if the distances or boundaries had been set.

Mr. Chad Major indicated that the group he is in had just finished their part, so now it has to go before the commission. What the group was working on was just a suggestion or proposal to the commission, so it was not final yet. The commission meets on December 4 to review the proposal, but the advisory

group is hopeful that the Louisiana addendum will be accepted in full. The proposal, if accepted, would expand the boundaries, but it did not specify what that distance would be, so that is yet to be determined. The group also proposed that the new schedule not be adopted until January 1, 2017, which will give everyone a learning curve or time to adjust. The group thinks 90% of the departments will do better on the new schedule. Mr. Major answered additional questions about the adoption of the new schedule and the proposed changes to the PIAL requirements.

Mr. Casey answered a few questions about the cost of the props and repairs to the multi-story. He indicated that the cost estimate he had for the repairs to the multi-story was \$750,000 for the worst-case scenario of repairs, but would result in a structure that could easily last 30 years. The cost estimate for the shipping container type prop was about \$250,000 and would last about 10 years. He also mentioned that with the props they currently have out for bid and the two replacement props that are on the way, they may have enough funding left over to get another class A trailer and if they are careful with how they did it, it could end up docking to another prop at FETI. AFG will not fund another prop at FETI unless it has a burn chamber, but that does not mean they could not make it work so that another prop could marry up to it.

Mr. Casey reiterated that he wanted to get a couple of people to attend a subcommittee meeting the next week to go over the plan for the AFG funding. He added that it would be really great to get one person from each association. After a brief scheduling discussion, Mr. Casey decided to schedule the meeting for the next Thursday at 10:00am at FETI, but also agreed to make it available via WebX for those that could not attend.

The discussion moved on to the new items.

Mr. Casey indicated that the group had previously discussed the Firefighter 1 and Fire Officer 1 programs moving to an online format. With the Fire Officer 1, the NFPA added a great deal of local specific requirements in there. FETI can't teach each department's procedures, so they discussed the mentor format with the fire chiefs and firefighters at some of the classes and meetings and got really good feedback, much better than expected. FETI is moving forward with that. They are meeting with a vendor next week to setup the online. The way the Fire Officer will go is that it will have a specific start date and end date. Much of the content will be online. It is Louisiana specific, but it meets the national standards. That program they are looking at doing in small pods around the state. A department could ask to host it. That is not a problem, FETI can do that like they do now. It will be very practically driven. FETI expects to have a pilot class during the winter.

The Firefighter 1 is progressing also, but it is setup differently. It is setup for local departments to be able to grab somebody who is interested and get them started and working through a mentor, where they have a specific person they are going to work with. FETI will have a more formal proposal as soon as they get a few bugs out of the online component. This will allow the departments to have a mentor to work with that is not instructor-certified, but mentor certified. Mr. Casey indicated that this was a program they had used at his old fire department for years and it is still being used now, 35 years later. It lets them get through well over half of the Firefighter 1 program this way. Then what we will propose is for areas that don't have the instructors or training facilities, FETI will come in and do regionals, with the live fire and things like that to finish off the program. This will help with the new PIAL and the certifications.

FETI is also looking at doing some of the blended learning with the inspector, instructor, some of the tactics classes and things like that. These aren't as agency specific as fire officer, so what FETI is proposing is to do it primarily online and then come to FETI or Pine Country to finish off the class. It would be basically two days. It will be very practical. It makes it much more accessible, since they are talking about a few days instead of five.

Mr. Casey also noted that one thing that will change is that with the certification side, if the department wants to use a certain set of books that's fine, but with the online side they will have to lock down one set of books and one vendor. That is what FETI is looking at doing for the online versions.

Mr. Casey moved on to the next topic by stating that FETI had not done a course cost analysis in many years, so they are working through that process now and will get back with the results. On a lot of classes the statutory dedicated account is paying for a majority of the programs and they are breaking that down to show everyone what costs what and how much and they are going to make some recommendations on that, some in the immediate future and then some a little bit further down the road.

The commission members asked for a training report by parish, and it was included in the director's report, so Mr. Casey briefly spoke about the report. By and large, he felt the attendance had been okay. He added that they are trying really hard to try and consolidate a lot of the evening drills to the one-nighters and trying to reach a broader audience. FETI is also trying to work closer with the departments to really push the Firefighter 1 and trying to go toward more of the accredited programs. They have one coming up in Avoyelles and a couple others they are working on. That is a big change in the delivery, but Mr. Casey feels it is a good change. It works out better for the departments and better for FETI and the instructors because they are reaching more people for the instructor man hours.

The commission briefly discussed the attendance and class numbers in the training report.

Mr. Casey asked if there were any questions. No responses were heard. Mr. Casey turned the meeting over to Mr. Steve Gervais to discuss the certifications.

Mr. Gervais provided some information about the municipal certifications and exam counts and the same thing for industrial. The report showed how many exams are being given for each certification as well as the associated revenue. Mr. Gervais offered to provide updates at each meeting, either by quarter, by year, or however the group wants it. He is planning to show the differences between the previous years and the current year, so they can see trends and tell if they are going up or down. Mr. Gervais is hoping to increase the number of certifications in both areas. To add to that, Mr. Gervais is also going to get with Nate to analyze the data and down the certifications by type and then by either region or parish or both, so they can see what parishes and regions are testing a lot and which ones are not.

#### Financial Report

Michael Donahue reviewed the report on the financials.

The year-to-date balance sheet showed significant or steady, positive gains versus prior years.

Michael Donahue asked that they reassemble the finance committee, because people have questions and once you understand what FETI is doing it makes perfect sense. In an open forum trying to go into line item detail to give people the information they want is rather cumbersome.

Mr. Donald Milligan asked a question about the costs and revenues of the certification program. Mr. Gervais and Mr. Donahue responded and indicated that the revenues of the certification program cover approximately 50% of the cost of the certification program. The attendees discussed closing the gap between the revenues and expenses and whether they should look at changing the costs with the breaking down of the modules.


Since the commission was missing several people, Mr. Major suggested that they save the slideshow presentation about the financials for the next meeting.

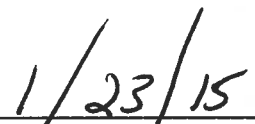
Mr. Major made a motion that was seconded by another attendee. No opposition was heard, so the motion went forward.

Mr. Major asked if anyone had any old business. No responses were heard.

After a brief scheduling discussion the group scheduled the next meeting for Thursday, December 11, 2014 at 10:00am at FETI.

Mr. Major made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by another attendee. No opposition was heard, so the meeting was adjourned.

  
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Approved by: Chad Major

  
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Date: